11: Lozic S-4 (no date) 1936 EE1 Bulgaria EE1

536 The theatre too has its votaries, and not only many prominent men of letters have contributed dramas and plays. but there are even some like M. Kostov, who devoted themselves exclusively to playwriting. The latter has won a well-deserved reputation as a comedy writer, which has transcended the narrow limits of his country, for such has been the success of his plays, that they have been translated into Rumanian and Serbian, and successfully staged both in Bucharest and Belgrade.

545 It would not be amiss to mention that the Bulgarians have succeeded in creating an opera and a theatre which compare very favourably with those of any of the larger provincial towns in western Europe, and this with an annual subsidy from the State of barely 12 million leva which is a most noteworthy feat. For a modest fee of one shilling, one may secure a most comfortable seat, and enjoy an excellent rendering of Wagner's Lohengrin, Verdi's Aïda, or Gounod's Faust, etc. It is regrettable that the best Bulgarian singers are often attracted by the lure of higher pay and appear more often in the opera houses of Prague and Paris, than that of Sofia, but the rendering of the choruses is always admirable. and compensates to a certain extent for the occasional absence of the protagonists. The staging too is perfect, and most modern, and is far ahead of what the average London theatre can offer.

●532 In painting also, the Bulgarians have produced quite a number of really talented artists. The paintings of Mitov, Mirkvitska. etc were greatly admired at the Paris exhibition of 1900, and secured most flattering distinctions. It is to be deplored that few have kept to the real path of art and not gone astray allured by modern tendencies which have revolutionised artistic conceptions after the world war. Artists, like the portraitist Nicolaï Mihailov, who has not sacrificed his artistic convictions to these modern ideas has won a well-deserved international reputation

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both in Europe and in America, those, however, who have set their sails to these withering winds have lost themselves in a maze of eccentricities which may be permissible on occasions to a genius, but which discredit the artist of average ability and expose him to be taken for an impostor and a charlatan.

Annual autumn shows are held in Sofia in which a picked review of total activity in painting is obtained, but except for a few gifted and devoted poets of colour and design, as well as for a few honest portraitists, exhibitors seem to excel in a sloppy diffuseness in still-life and landscape. Foreign visitors, who have no predilection for 'impressionism' or 'futurism', generally come away from these shows with the impression that they are rather exhibitions of misdirected energy, which for the very sake of the exhibitors themselves, a poverty-stricken community should not encourage.